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1910

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Vo

The Ranch Girl

A Comedy
in Four Acts

THE RANCH GIRL

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

Act. I.—Open space near a Southwestern Texas Railway Station.

Act II.—Interior of a Ranch House.

Act. III.—Same as Act II.

Act. IV.—Same as Act I.

Place.—Southwestern Texas.

Time.—The Present.

Re-written from former copy

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Characters

HARRY MERRIMAN—A wealthy young man from New York, and graduate of Harvard, who is visiting the Ranch country in company with Alice Alwell and Betsy Blinder, to the latter of whom he is engaged to be married.

LAYTON LORN—A young man from Boston who, for some years, has been proprietor of a Ranch; in love with Alice Alwell and brother of Winnie Lorn.

THOMAS GALL—An Eastern man who also is proprietor of a ranch; somewhat of a misanthrope; uncle of both Alice Alwell and Betsy Blinder.

FOODLE—Servant of Layton Lorn.

WINNIE LORN—Young lady from Boston, sister of Layton Lorn, and on a visit to his Ranch.

ALICE ALWELL—Young lady from New York, cousin of Betsy Blinder, niece of Thomas Gall, and on a visit to his Ranch; in love with Layton Lorn.

BETSY BLINDER—Young lady from New York, cousin of Alice Alwell, niece of Thomas Gall, and on a visit to his Ranch; engaged to be married to Harry Merriman.

Waiter, Members of a Traveling Company of Singers, Cowboys or Herdsmen of Ranch.



Dress and Properties

Harry Merriman—In Acts I and IV, a gentleman's traveling suit, with or without knee breeches. In Acts II and III, a girl's dress with bare or open neck and arms, feet visible, etc.

Layton Lorn—In Acts I and II, slouch hat, colored shirt, with or without coat, knee breeches or top boots; in Act IV, gentleman's traveling suit. In Act II, a belt containing two pistols, to be taken from a table drawer.

Thomas Gall—Slouch hat, colored shirt, with or without coat, knee breeches or top boots.

Foodle—Slouch hat, colored shirt, top boots.

Winnie Lorn—In Acts I and IV, either a traveling or a mountain dress; in Acts II and III, either a mountain or an indoor working dress; in Act I, a cap or a hat without a brim, and a veil, also flowers in hand. In Act II a hat that can be removed, apron, a note book, and a bundle of clothes; also belt containing two pistols, to be taken from a table drawer in Act IV, a hat and sunshade and a fan hanging from belt. Also a package of letters.

Alice Alwell, Betsy Blinder—Lady's walking or traveling suits, carrying umbrellas in Act I, and umbrellas with outside cloaks or waterproofs in Act III. Betsy has a fan hanging from a chain attached to her belt and in Act I has a bonnet without a brim and has a package containing a brooch.

Waiter—A man's suit and a napkin.

Members of a College Student Quartette—Either in fancy costume with knee breeches, or in men's ordinary traveling suits. The First Singer in Act I has a red wig in his pocket.

Cowboys or Herdsmen—Slouch hats, colored shirts, top boots, whips, etc.

PLOT

Act. I.—Harry Merriman, giving concerts in the West as a member of a college quartette, meets, at a railway station, Betsy Blinder, to whom he is engaged, together with her cousin, Alice Alwell.—They are visiting the ranch of their uncle, Thomas Gall.—His ranch is within a few miles of that of Layton Lorn, who, a few years before, has been engaged to Alice.—Lorn happens to be at the station with his sister, Winnie, who, because recovering from measles, wears a thick veil concealing her face.—A waiter refers to her as Lorn's wife.—Betsy recognizes Lorn, and, in spite of Harry's protest that they ought not to bring Alice and Lorn together, insists upon introducing Harry to them.—This, and a deception with reference to a brooch, reveals Betsy's character to him.—He is evidently fascinated by Winnie, and when, later, Betsy and Alice, both influenced by jealousy, as well as by misunderstanding of her exact relation to Lorn, who happens to say that he is not married, talk against her, he defends her with extravagant praise.—Then, suddenly, Gall comes, and tells them that Winnie is Lorn's sister.

Act. II.—Winnie is left alone on her brother's ranch, except for some cowboys.—Harry and his companions, in walking across the country, have come upon some horses, and Harry, in fun, has mounted one of them that has run with him toward Layton's ranch. The Cowboys, supposing Harry to be trying to steal the horse, chase him, and fire at him.—He takes refuge in the ranch-house with Winnie. She recognizes him, but he does not, at first, recognize her.—To save him from the Cowboys, whom she may not be able to control, she dresses him in a woman's gown, and passes him off as a servant-girl whom she has been expecting.—The deception is aided by a vaudeville wig which Harry is seen putting into his pocket in the first act.—Winnie tries to teach Harry housekeeping and cleansing.—In a little time, the other Singers arrive.—Then the Cowboys come to search the ranch, equally for Harry, and for the spirits on which they expect to get drunk.—Harry pulls his pistol, and, aided by the Singers called in from the next room, the Cowboys are foiled.

Act. III.—While Harry is still in his disguise, Bessie, Alice and Gall suddenly take refuge in Lorn's ranch to escape a rain-storm.—Betsy, put out by the weather, reveals her unfortunate temper by berating everything and everybody including Harry, to whom Alice happens to refer.—Betsy, at last, orders the servant-girl, Harry, to remove her gown, and, while she scolds and abuses him, he pulls off his wig.

Act. IV.—Betsy, aided by Alice and Gall, and, threatening a lawsuit for breach of promise, tries to make up with Harry.—Then, getting angry at him, she publicly dismisses him, much to his delight.—Gall gives Betsy his opinion of her deceitfulness.—Winnie, who has at first rejected, accepts Harry, and Alice, also, makes up with Lorn.

THE RANCH GIRL

ACT I.

SCENE: *Open space near a Southwestern Texas railway station. Mountain scenery backing. At right, between Upper and First Entrances, part of a small hotel or restaurant with a bench resting against its wall, and in front of it, nearer the middle of the stage, a table, behind which are three or more chairs. At left, between Upper and Second Entrances, part of a railway station building with the sign "R. R. Ticket Office" on it. Entrances Right Upper behind hotel, Right Third, by a door into hotel (where there might be a porch with steps), Right Second, in front of hotel, Left Upper and Left Second. The curtain rising discloses members of a College Quartette making a singing tour in the West. One of the Singers is HARRY MERRIMAN.*

FIRST SINGER. Have you noticed the echoes here?

SECOND SINGER. Very fine! worth giving a song, if merely to hear them applaud us.

ALL SING.

Oh, what is the matter, and why do we care
For an empty, visionless whiff of air?
Ah, though the wind be nothing to see,
It bends and batters and breaks the tree;
And, oh, we know a breeze that serves
To shock and shiver and shatter the nerves,
And snuff the light of life with a breath;
It has nothing to see, but it ends in death—
Ho ho, ho ho,
That blow, blow, blow, blow, blow!

Oh, what is the matter, and why do we care
For a silent sight of the sunshine there?
Ah, though no sound may rouse the ear,
The bud and blossom of spring are here;
And, oh, we know a sight so bright
It cheers the world like heavenly light,
Till far away fly doubt and strife;
It has nothing to hear, but it lures to life—
High high, high high,
That eye, eye, eye, eye, eye!

(*As the chorus ends, the FIRST SINGER, in taking a handkerchief from his pocket, draws out with it a brilliantly red wig.*)

SECOND SINGER. Hello!—and what have you there?

FIRST SINGER (*exhibiting the wig*). It resembles Harry's wig.

HARRY (*to FIRST SINGER*). My wig?

FIRST SINGER. Left out when packing! I found it under the table.

HARRY. And lucky for me that you did! Here, let me relieve you of it. (*FIRST SINGER hands the wig to HARRY, who puts it in his pocket, as he goes on to say:*) My rôle, if not crowned by this, would appear to be poorly played as a captain's of German hussars not wearing his horse-hair plume. No show for me or of me in vaudeville, then, you know. Just think of my star-song, shorn of the brilliance of all these rays,—would be dead as an Indian's yelp were he scalped. (*Sounds of an arriving railway train are heard.*)

FIRST SINGER. Why, there comes the train!

SECOND SINGER. And now for your sweetheart, Harry. And if you are feeling too bashful, hide under your wig, my boy.

Exeunt—Left Second—HARRY and THIRD SINGER.

FIRST SINGER. Is not so bad an idea. No man of us knows a sweetheart until he has heard and seen her when not on her guard. Fact is, the truth in the world, like a fox on a farm, has been forced to hide in order to live; so finding it always involves finding out what has been kept in.

Exeunt—Left Second—FIRST and SECOND SINGERS.

Enter—Left Upper—GALL, closely followed by ALICE ALWELL. GALL has on a soft felt hat, colored shirt and top boots. ALICE is in a fashionable traveling costume. GALL is loaded down with an umbrella, valise, shawl-strap, etc. ALICE carries a sunshade.

GALL. So glad to see you two girls. And, Alice, how you have grown! The image, too, of your mother.

ALICE. You know how to compliment, uncle.

GALL. (*Looking around, then crossing the stage to bench in front of hotel, and placing luggage on or near it.*) Your journey pleasant? (*The two take seats at the table.*)

ALICE. Delightful, not a single detention.

GALL (*looking toward Left Upper Entrance*). Not till you got out here, you mean. Who are those fellows that met you?

ALICE. Are students from Harvard.

GALL. From Harvard? And what are they doing in ranchdom?

ALICE. Are giving concerts around.—Oh, less for the money, you know, than just for a lark!

GALL. I see; and lighted down here by appointment!

ALICE (*laughing*). To tell you the truth, Uncle Tom, that Mr. Merriman there is engaged to Betsy.

GALL (*taking bill of fare from the table, and rapping for WAITER*). Engaged? For long?—and why not married? No cash for it?

ALICE. He has, yes. The match would be brilliant for her. I have thought though—he met her at Cambridge—it might be a college engagement.

GALL. And what is a college engagement?

ALICE. Why, that of a home-sick boy, who wants a mother or sister.

GALL. More prose than poetry, Alice, in that. He goes back with you?

ALICE. Yes; arranged that way, I believe.

GALL. (*Rapping again for the WAITER.*) May prove him a sensible man. Our natures are much like buckets—slop over the most when jolted. And what jolts more than a journey? No wise man swallows his physic until he has had it well shaken.

ALICE. You mean that Harry?—

GALL. (*Rapping once more for WAITER.*) I mean that it often might turn out as well to take one's wedding journey before, not after, the church has shut one out from hearing, till he or his mate are dead, any more of the wedding music.

ALICE. But Harry is not like that. He is never serious, uncle.

Enter—Right Second—WAITER.

GALL (*to WAITER*). You think it economy, eh! To keep your customers waiting till at their hungriest? Well? (*Looking at bill of fare and handing it to ALICE*)—And Alice, what will you have? (*To WAITER.*) You serve a regular dinner?

WAITER. In half an hour.

GALL. (*Looking toward ALICE who nods approvingly.*) Serve us then a dinner for four. (*To ALICE.*) And so you think your jovial friend not serious, Alice. I doubt it. The birds that sing most are the birds whose natures the most need singing; and the men that make merry the most are the men whose natures most need a world that appears to be merry.

ALICE. With Harry, it seems to be merely exuberant life, bubbling over.

GALL. A student of human nature, or lunacy—much the same thing—finds out that those whose wits bubble over the first are the first to be losing their wits; that the mind whose thought comes first as a joke to be cracked, is the mind that is first to be cracked itself. Yes, Alice, the lightest of moods, and the brightest as well, are often mere spray flung up from the waves that a serious blow has been tossing.

ALICE. Aha! You seem roiled yourself.

GALL. I married one time you remember—Miss Betsy's aunt; and at present you think that I live with her, eh? (*Looking toward Left Entrance.*) But there they come. It reminds me that I must look after my donkeys.

GALL and ALICE rise.

Exeunt—Right Second—GALL.

Enter—Left Second—BETSY, in fashionable traveling costume, wearing a hat or bonnet without a brim and carrying a fan, a large umbrella and a very small box.

BETSY. (*Looking back toward Left, and speaking to ALICE, in a vexed tone.*) Now, what is that Harry doing? He has left me again, all alone. I never saw such a—why! (*Sitting at the table and opening the box in her hand.*) Do you see what came in the mail that Uncle just handed me, eh? (*Taking from a box a brooch.*) The brooch Aunt Clara had promised. Absurd to send it out here, though it was my birthday! Wait!—(*Looking toward the Left with a meditative air.*) It was when I told Harry I thought it was he had invited us girls to the ball at the Harvard club—it was then he proposed to me. Humph! (*Looking at brooch, and then toward Left.*)

ALICE. You are going to make Harry believe that you think that the brooch came from him?

BETSY. Why not?—He might have sent something. He should have sent something; and I, I mean to teach him a lesson. He has been too backward, of late.

Enter—Left Second—HARRY in traveling costume—loaded down with shawl-straps, valises, etc.

Exit—Right Third—ALICE.

BETSY. (*Rising and rushing at HARRY, causing her umbrella to be thrust violently toward him.*) O, Harry, you dear old thing!

HARRY. Hold on. Do you think me a reindeer to be gone for with an umbrella?

BETSY. (*Holding up the brooch.*) But, Harry, just look at this brooch. It has come already, you see.

HARRY. (*Putting his luggage on one of the chairs.*) But I—

BETSY. No matter, now, Harry. No need of your saying a word.

HARRY. It was not—

BETSY. Oh, no; it was not—not told me, but then I could guess.

HARRY. But it might be unjust, you know.

BETSY. At least, not so to your heart; nor to mine, if I wanted to think it. (*Suddenly changing the subject.*) Will you stay with us long here, Harry?

HARRY. Depends on my business.

BETSY. What?

HARRY. On my business.

BETSY. Humph, what is that?

HARRY. (*Arranging the luggage.*) Just now, is attending to you.

BETSY. (*Shaking the brooch at him.*) You would like to spend all of your life attending to some one's wants.

HARRY. But, really, now, that brooch—

BETSY. (*Coquettishly placing her fan on his shoulder.*) Come, come, what I said was true. You would like to spend—

HARRY. Yes, but I was talking of getting, not spending, of business.

BETSY. Business?

HARRY. Yes—the art of getting and keeping what every one else is wanting.

BETSY. (*Taking the words as a compliment to herself.*) Oh, Harry, you flatter one so!

Enter—Right Second—WAITER with napkin in hand.

Enter—Left Second—LORN and WINNIE.

HARRY (*to WAITER*). Has anyone ordered a dinner?

WAITER (*pointing to LORN and WINNIE*). Oh, yes—that man and his wife.

Exeunt—Left Upper—LORN and WINNIE.

BETSY (*looking after them*). As I live! It is Layton Lorn. I knew he had gone on a ranch. It is likely he lives close by here. You know he was once engaged, or as good as engaged, to Alice.

HARRY. Miss Alwell?

BETSY. Yes. He was poor. Her father broke off the engagement; he came out West. We had heard of another attachment; and look—his brand new wife, I suppose.

HARRY (*to WAITER*). Has no one else ordered dinner?—Mr. Gall, for instance. You know him?

WAITER. Oh, yes!—a dinner for four.

HARRY. All right! How soon can we have it?

WAITER. In twenty-five minutes, I think.

Exit—Right Second—WAITER—very slowly.

HARRY. (*Looking after the WAITER.*) That waiter is like myself. Whenever I have to wait, I much prefer to sit down. (*Motioning to chairs, BETSY and HARRY sit down. She places the brooch in the box which she leaves in her lap.*)

BETSY. Do I look as well in this hat as I did in the other one, Harry?

HARRY. Oh, no.

BETSY. (*Rather reluctantly.*) Why, others think "Yes." And you ought to think, you ought, that *I* always look well in *all* hats.

HARRY. But the other hat had a brim; and, whenever the sun is shining who *could* look as well at things in a hat that has not a brim?

BETSY. (*Shaking her finger at him.*) A regular Midas, Harry! Turn everything that you touch—

HARRY. Into gold?

BETSY. No, something better.

HARRY. One tickling touch of my hand could make one a Merri-man, eh?

BETSY. It would be so much for us both to be one in everything, Harry.

HARRY. You women all want that—to be won; but some want the men a little more *won* than themselves. And when both are made one, which is it? It is sometimes the *one* that is not *won*.

BETSY. How silly you are, when you try. Last night I dreamt—

HARRY. About late suppers or grandmothers, which?

BETSY. Shall I tell you? I thought I had wings.

HARRY. An angel?

BETSY. A humming bird—

HARRY. Humming? At what?

BETSY. Why, around a rose that rose—

HARRY. And fell—

BETSY. And fell? Why, what do you think me describing?

HARRY. Why, humming in sleep, was it not? Or the lungs that were making the humming? And rose and fell will fit either.

BETSY. My humming in sleep!—in sleep! That is not a pleasant suggestion.

HARRY. Then what were you going to say?

BETSY. That rose round which I was humming, was you.

HARRY. And that reminds me that *I* had a dream.

BETSY. What was it?

HARRY. I forget what the dream was about; but when I woke up a mosquito was humming and—

BETSY. Oh, now, Harry!

Enter—Right Second—ALICE and GALL.

ALICE. Come look at our wagons out here.

HARRY and BETSY rise. *As she rises, the box containing the brooch falls to the ground, and remains there.*

BETSY. *(After giving a spiteful look at HARRY, to GALL.)* A thirty-mile ride is long. Do you think there will be any danger?

GALL. Not unless you fall out by the way. The wagon has seats without backs.

Exit—Right Second—BETSY.

(GALL continues to HARRY.) If you were but going with us—

HARRY. *(Placing his hand on his pistol pocket, then extending hands.)* My arms might support them, you think?

Exit—Right Second—HARRY.

GALL. *(To ALICE.)* If I know Betsy, I think if he tried to support her long, they would both fall out together.

Exit—Right Second—GALL and ALICE.

Enter—Left Upper—LAYTON LORN and WINNIE LORN. LORN has broad-brimmed Mexican felt hat, colored shirt and high-topped boots. WINNIE is in mountain costume and cap without brim (so that the veil, to be mentioned presently, can be bound over her eyes). She carries wild flowers in her hand, which, presently, she

places on the table. She seats herself at the right of this table and LORN at the left.

LORN. No girl upon this train, Winnie! No hope of her coming, I fear! You will have to continue to cook, and to wait, and to keep on scrubbing. You should never have come to the ranch. I fear we shall tire you to death—is too much to ask you to be both sister and servant—am sorry you rode here to meet me today. But I was afraid that the girl would be timid if I were alone.

WINNIE. But, Latie, I liked the ride; not for anything would I have missed it. You know we came over the hills, and then through the dearest of valleys all covered with prairie flowers, like a bed with a patch-work spread. You see, I have brought you some. (*She begins to make a little bouquet for a button-hole.*)

LORN. I am glad that you take to flowers. I fear you will find little else out here to enjoy.

WINNIE. I shall have, for one thing, my brother Latie.

LORN. Not much of the time, I take it. I am kept very busy, you know.

WINNIE. And then I shall have the sheep, and the cows, and the dogs, and the men.

LORN. Such men! You will never take much to them.

WINNIE. They are animals, too. (*She rises, and begins to pin her bouquet on LORN's breast.*)

LORN. And at times, might be made ornamental?

WINNIE. (*Standing off, and regarding the bouquet.*) They are ornamental, at times.

LORN. To pin to, or tie to, Winnie? There are no such men out here.

WINNIE. And no such women, old boy—the reason why I came to be here.

LORN. A reason, as well, why I should father you, Winnie. See now—have been tempted again by these flowers. You must keep your veil down—so. (*Rising and pinning WINNIE's veil over her face.*) The sun is too bright for your eyes. A girl that has measles at twenty must be treated as if she were ten. (*WINNIE sits down again.*)

Enter—Left Upper—HARRY and BETSY, and watch LORN and WINNIE, whose face is now wholly concealed.

BETSY (*starting forward*). I am going to meet her.

HARRY. Wait!—Let us think, a moment, of Alice!—was in love with him once, you said. If the three were to come together, and a spark of the old love lived, who knows?—It might start a fire—

BETSY. Of blushes, I see. What a joke!

HARRY. (*Surprised and troubled.*) You think lost love is a joke? (*Mainly to himself as he turns to one side.*) We laugh at it, yes, I know. And so does the devil—about the only thing that

he laughs at. And a deal of fun, there is, too, for him on the earth, I suppose.

BETSY. What is that?

HARRY. I was thinking—

BETSY. Of me?

HARRY. (*Surprised, yet significantly.*) Perhaps. We were talking of Alice.

BETSY. You think more of Alice than me?

HARRY. I think more of her than of them. (*Pointing toward WINNIE and LORN.*) You deem it best they should meet?

BETSY. If not, they will have to.

HARRY. Humph, humph!

BETSY. (*Advancing toward LORN and WINNIE from the left.*) Why, why, Mr. Lorn, as I think.

LORN. Miss Blinder!—and what brought you here?

BETSY. Just came from New York on a visit. You know my uncle, perhaps, Thomas Gall, whose ranch is close by.

LORN. Delighted to welcome you, too! Here, Winnie, Miss Blinder—an old acquaintance of mine. (*WINNIE rises and exchanges bows with BETSY.*)

BETSY. So happy! (*Introducing MERRIMAN.*) My friend, Mr. Merriman. (*LORN and HARRY shake hands.*)

LORN. (*To HARRY.*) Strangers are welcome to Texas.

HARRY. Am pleased to meet you. (*Exchanging bows with WINNIE.*) And you, Mrs. Lorn. (*WINNIE evidently notices his use of the terms Mrs.*)

LORN. (*To BETSY.*) So, so! Thomas Gall is your uncle! Then we shall be neighbors, yes, yes; only twenty-five miles apart.—Can show you out here both ranches (*pointing toward Right Second Entrance*).

Exit—Right Second—LORN and BETSY.

(*WINNIE resumes her seat. HARRY takes the seat left by LORN.*) HARRY. Only twenty-five miles apart—are very near neighbors of yours.

WINNIE. And yet I have heard of neighbors one wished to have further away.

HARRY. I suppose that you like your life here?

WINNIE. As far as I know it, I do.

HARRY. Not lived here long?

WINNIE. No—in Boston.

HARRY. In Boston?

WINNIE. In Cambridge.

HARRY. In Cambridge?

WINNIE. In Cambridge.

HARRY. Three times and out! You have it.

WINNIE. Am dreadfully sorry. The experienced traveler now, in writing home, I suppose, will be forced to draw on his fancy to paint his graphic encounter with the wild, rude, horrible ranch girl.

HARRY. The means of his observation were limited—saw through a veil very darkly.

WINNIE. Afraid of the sun.

HARRY. My father's?

WINNIE. Oh, yes;—so bright! You, too, know Cambridge, perhaps.

HARRY. When I was a student at Harvard, I used to know Boston; but Cambridge—used to cut Cambridge.

WINNIE. You did? Very strange.

HARRY. What, cutting it?

WINNIE. No; but I think I have seen you before.

HARRY. I wonder if I have seen you. You have an advantage—that veil—

WINNIE. I think it was on the first base.

HARRY. Oh, yes; you are right—first base! You heard me, you say.

WINNIE. I saw you.

HARRY. But I thought I was there to be heard.

WINNIE. And you were! You yelled like a savage.

HARRY. Beg pardon?

WINNIE. You made a great hit.

HARRY. I should think so—from such a description! I suppose you enjoy the yelling of savages, too, out here.

WINNIE. The Indians never play.

HARRY. Of course, they never are playing, but fighting, when yelling like me!

WINNIE. You said you were on the baseball club.

HARRY. Oh, no!—first base on the glee club. The only baseball of mine was on it. However, there was a Merriman, too, on the ball club; but he was much darker than I. If you lifted your veil, you might see it.

WINNIE. Have no curiosity, thank you. I heard you, perhaps, at Commencement.

HARRY. Heard of me, perhaps, when the fellows first heard of my name on the list of those who were taking degrees. There is nothing a circus cheers more than a man who, in riding a horse, appears to be thrown, and is not.

WINNIE. You managed then to hold on.

HARRY. I did—at the tail of the class.

WINNIE. The tail is the place—not so?—for a *wag*?

HARRY. Or those who *get set on*.

WINNIE. Men never can set on or keep on a man that lives by his wits.

HARRY. Oh, that is a woman's right,—to live by her wits, not work!

WINNIE. Now, honestly, do you believe that the women work less than the men?

HARRY. Why "honestly"?

WINNIE. Why do you ask?

HARRY. Because in a world of donkeys, all trying to hide their

ears in a lion's hide that hides nothing, how can one be wholly honest yet wholly polite? You see dishonesty is to politeness what Latin is to a doctor, or pedantry is to a teacher, or lace to a last year's ball dress. We all see through it; and yet we all say nothing about it.

WINNIE. And you really think we women work less than the men. I should like to set you at housekeeping.

HARRY. Madam, there are women that I would give all I am worth to have set me at that.

WINNIE. Your hands could not stand it.

HARRY. Oh, yes; my hands could stand a good deal (*he thrusts his hands toward her, as both are sitting; she takes them in hers and looks at them intently*); but, perhaps, not your inspection! Your veil interferes, not so?—Humph! what are you trying to find?—The marks of toil, or of soil?

WINNIE. Of character. Surely you know your hand is your fortune?

HARRY. It is?—You say that to me as a man. But the face is the woman's fortune. Not fair I should give you mine; and you not give me yours! (*Moving his head as if to peek through her veil; Winnie looks at his hands.*)

Enter—Right Upper—BETSY and ALICE.

BETSY. (*Advancing, and speaking to ALICE.*) Why, what in the world are they doing?

HARRY. (*Looking up at BETSY.*) I am giving my hand to her, Betsy. And she is to get my fortune.

BETSY. Your fortune?

HARRY. I said so. Perhaps she will tend to yours first. Sit down. (*Rising, and offering his seat to BETSY, who draws back.*) Oh, now! We are not at a game, to be lost by showing your hand.

BETSY. (*Turning to ALICE.*) It is perfectly shocking.

(*HARRY reseats himself. WINNIE looks at his hands.*)

ALICE. (*To BETSY, as both move toward Left Second Entrance.*) What is it?

BETSY. (*Pointing toward WINNIE.*) That woman was holding his hand.

ALICE. Whose?—Harry's?—Absurd!—You know it. It was only one more of his jokes.

BETSY. And you know that I, Alice Alwell, was never brought up in that way.

ALICE. In what way?

BETSY. (*Pointing toward WINNIE.*) In that way, Alice. And I shall have nothing to do with a woman like that.

ALICE. Who is she?

BETSY. Who is she?—Why, Layton Lorn's wife. The waiter here said so just now.

ALICE. (*Greatly agitated.*) His wife?—and Layton's?

BETSY. These men—you never know what they will do!—some

half-gypsy girl, I suppose, he has picked up out here on the ranch.

ALICE. (*To herself.*) His wife?—and my only reason for coming out here was to meet him?

Enter—Left Second—LORN.

LORN. (*Advancing eagerly to shake hands with her.*) Why, Alice, are you out here, too? I can hardly believe my own eyes. Why this!—it is like old times. (*ALICE takes his hand and bows stiffly.*) (*LORN looks down at his attire, as if suspecting this to be the reason of her stiffness.*) Yes, yes. I do appear rough, but a few years more of this, and I shall go back independent.

ALICE (*to LORN*). Are you living out here alone?

LORN (*to ALICE*). I have been, but now I have her (*pointing to WINNIE*).

ALICE. Are married?

LORN (*smiling significantly*). Oh, no; not married!

Enter hurriedly—Right Third—GALL.

GALL. (*To ALICE and BETSY.*) Our dinner is ready at last.

BETSY, ALICE and GALL exchange bows with LORN.

Exeunt—Right Third—BETSY, ALICE and GALL.

LORN. (*To HARRY and WINNIE, who rise.*) You two appear to be friends. (*To HARRY.*) You must come and see us. Come often. I have to go off at times, for half of the day, and more; and Winnie will feel it a godsend for some one to make things lively. If riding out on the ranches, come over there just as you are. We are free and easy out here.

HARRY. (*Shaking hands with WINNIE and LORN.*) Oh, thank you. Be sure that I will (*gesturing toward Right Third Entrance.*) They asked me to dine with them there.

Exit—Right Third—HARRY.

WINNIE. (*Excitedly taking her veil down.*) But why did you urge him so to come to the ranch to see me?—a perfect stranger, like that!

LORN. Oh, no; not a perfect stranger. I have known all about him for years; and a fine fellow, too. You will like him.

WINNIE. Did you hear what he called me?

LORN. What?

WINNIE. (*Laughing.*) Not Miss, but Mrs.

LORN. He did? I wonder if that could have been the trouble with Alice Alwell? You told him, of course, his mistake?

WINNIE. Not I.

LORN. Why not?

WINNIE. Do you know, he is rather a charming man! Men sel-

dom take off their coats and sit down in the sleeves of their souls with a woman, unless she is married. I may see him without his coating.

Exeunt—Right Second—LORN and WINNIE.

Enter—Right Third—BETSY, ALICE, and HARRY.

HARRY. Why, what are you after, Betsy?

BETSY (*looking on the ground*). I have lost that brooch.

HARRY. You have?—You put it inside of a box; and were sitting here. (*Looks on the ground.*) Oh, yes. I see it—there! (*Picks up the box, and looks at it.*) But, say, my writing is not like that; nor is that my postmark, either.

BETSY (*snatching the box from him*). Here, Harry, you give it to me. How little you know about girls! We carry around with us always all sorts of boxes.

HARRY (*rather incredulously*). You do?

BETSY. Did you hear Mr. Lorn when he said that woman and he were not married?

HARRY. Oh, yes! He said to me, too, they were free and easy, out here. Some things improper Down East are right in the West, I suppose.

BETSY. It makes me ashamed of you, Harry.

HARRY. What?

BETSY. Talking of things like this as if they were nothing but trifles.

HARRY. Why not, if they are?

BETSY. They are not.

HARRY. And how do you know they are not?

BETSY. How know?—I have eyes and ears and a little of something else that *you* may not understand.

HARRY. What is that?

BETSY. Humph!—moral sense!

HARRY. What has that to do with it, pray?

BETSY. A woman that lives with a man; and every one calls her his wife; and yet they have never been married!

HARRY. But they will be in time, I suppose.

BETSY. And why not at present?

HARRY. The parson may live a long distance away. She came from the East. They are waiting.

BETSY. And that is all that you know?

HARRY. What more do you know yourself?

BETSY. Why, just to look at her once, with her voice and her flirting ways, would show a person of sense exactly the thing that she is.

HARRY. I grant it—exactly the way I have found her a perfect lady.

BETSY (*to Alice*). Oh, Alice, just think!

ALICE (*to MERRIMAN*). It does appear strange, Mr. Merriman, yes.

BETSY. You men are the biggest fools when it comes to a pretty face.

HARRY. I never have seen her face. It was hid in a veil, all the time.

BETSY. Then how do you know her?

HARRY. At times, one knows his ideal, though hid in the clouds up above.

BETSY. Ideal!—Such a low-down scrub as that!

HARRY. Take care! You are going too far. What right have you, Betsy, to judge a girl you know nothing about?

BETSY. The same right, I take it, that you have.—Now what can you answer to that?

HARRY. You might not take to my answer.

BETSY. I think I could risk it.

HARRY. Well, then, from what I have seen of the lady, if she were but free from Lorn, I should feel any fellow was wise, if tempted to stay here all summer for a chance of finding, perhaps, the best thing the world could bring him.

Enter—Right Third—GALL.

GALL. The dinner will all be cold. (*Looking at them in surprise.*)

Why, what is the matter?—I seem—

BETSY (*sarcastically*). Our friend, Mr. Merriman, here, appears to have fallen in love.

GALL. With whom?

BETSY. With whom do you think? Mr. Lorn's not yet married wife.

GALL. His wife?—Humph!—That was his sister.

BETSY *appears frightened*, ALICE *rejoiced*, and HARRY *embarrassed*.

CURTAIN.

ACT. II.

SCENE: *The interior of Ranch House. Backing, at Right Center, is an open window. Between the place of Right Center and of Right Third Entrance, are two pegs, on one of which hangs a large overcoat, on the other, an apron. Near the place of Right Third Entrance, are shelves on which, in connection with other things readily suggesting themselves, are a large tin wash-pan and two other tin-pans, and a dish containing a large quantity of rice. On the floor, in front of these shelves, is a slop-pail, also a bucket full of water, in which bucket is a tin-dipper. Backing, at Left Center is a table surmounted by a closed closet never opened. In the table is a drawer containing two belts. One of them can be fastened around the waist of LORN and the other around that of WINNIE. In each belt are two pistols. Those in the belt of WINNIE can be easily taken from it. Between the place of the Left Upper Entrance and the Left Third Entrance is a washstand with bowl and pitcher. Above the washstand is a mirror, and beside the mirror hangs a towel, evidently intended for the hands and face. Near the place of Left Third Entrance is a small table on which is a wet dishcloth and a holder to be used in lifting tea-kettle. Near the place of Right Front Entrance is a cooking-stove; and on it is a tea-kettle. Beside the stove, near the middle of the stage, are two chairs. Behind them, in the middle of the stage, is a table spread with a white cloth, on which are unwashed dishes left from a meal—plates, tumblers, etc. Entrances by doors at Right Second, Left Second, and Left Upper.*

Enter—Right Second—LORN.

(He hangs his hat on the peg near the door, sits in a chair near the stove, and prepares to smoke.)

Enter—Right Second—WINNIE, in outdoor dress and hat, which latter she removes, hangs on one of the pegs, from which she takes an apron and puts it on. Then she busies herself with housework.

LORN. It is kind of you, very kind, Winnie, to bring us so much of your sunshine. But sunshine may bring with it shade. I fear that the ship of your hope is in danger of being beached.

WINNIE. Why, I hardly ever enjoyed myself so much in my life. Every atom of air is as keen and as bright as a dart of a Cupid to tingle one's blood to a glow and make one in love with all things. And then we have so much to see!

LORN. You have enterprise, Winnie. The most of the people out here have to hunt as much for a thing to see as they do for a thing to eat.

WINNIE. They do?—with the sheep and the cattle that keep up their going and coming; and clouds of grasshoppers flying, and

coyotes and partridges darting up out of the rocks and the grasses, and rattlesnakes turning to life the very sticks at your feet! The most enlivening place I ever set foot in, Latie! I have just had a ride with Foodle. We went over here three miles to visit a prairie-dog town. We found such a lovely valley; and, at last, we spied three owls. At first I thought they were bird's nests, bushed up on a dead tree's branches; but Foodle called them watchmen—night watchmen, you know, of the dog-town. I wonder whether they guard the dogs the most, or haunt them. Well, then, as we passed the owls, we pounced, full drive, on the town. The dogs were sunning themselves on the tops of their little mounds. When Foodle drove in among them, you ought to have seen them dodging and darting down to their holes. It seemed to me just like charging through hills of elephant ants. You do everything here out West on a very big scale.

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE with slouch hat, red shirt and pants stuck in his boots.

LORN (to FOODLE). Well, Foodle, I am glad you are taking such care of my sister. She says, thanks to you, she is having a very good time.

FOODLE. Exactly the thing as I likes. But there boys be a-come outside as wants to see yer right off.

LORN. Is it so? I will go to them then.

Exit—Right Second—LORN.

WINNIE (to FOODLE, while both busy themselves by arranging plates on the table). Ugh, ugh! no need to tell Latie about that rattle-snake, ugh! Why, it seemed as if it had dropped down out of my very dress. And they say they slip into houses. Ugh, ugh! Why mice would be nothing. You have only to shake at them so (*shaking skirts*). But snakes!—No wonder that Eve ate the apple at bid of a snake! I think that I might have eaten a peck of them, seeds and all. But in spite of that, Foodle, you know we had a fine ride today. Without you here, this ranch would be like a horse without harness,—have plenty of go in it still, but nothing that one could go with. Do you think that the cook might come by the morning train?

FOODLE. Of course.

WINNIE. She would have to wait for us, then, all day, at the station. If trying to walk here, she might be lost.

FOODLE. And if she should prove such a fool, would be more of a loss to herself than to us, I reckon.

Enter—Right Second—LORN.

LORN. Foodle, I want you to saddle my horse.

Exit—Right Second—FOODLE.

LORN (*keeps moving about the room, evidently preparing to go away*). Bad news for you, Winnie! A band of Mexicans, twelve miles south, have made a raid on our ranch, and driven off one of our herds.

WINNIE. (*Alarmed*.) And will they come here, and attack us?

LORN. No; anywhere else except here. A man who fights with thieves has justice to fight beside him. They show their backs to the one and they dare not face the other. What I wanted to say is this: that I must be off to find them.

WINNIE. (*More alarmed*.) But, Latie, suppose they should kill you?

LORN (*changing his boots for riding boots*). There is not the least fear of that. We have many more men than they. They are all, too, a set of cowards. To take aim they would have to face us.

WINNIE. But when shall I see you again? Tonight, do you think—for supper?

LORN. Oh, no; not so soon—I fear. I may not be back till tomorrow.

WINNIE. You are going to leave me alone?

LORN. Yes, that was my bad news, Winnie. You see, this may be a question of thousands of dollars for me. If thieves were no more than rats, you would have to begin by fighting; or else be run over completely.

WINNIE. And I must stay here?

LORN. (*Putting on his overcoat*.) Of course. (*Then, seeing WINNIE'S anxiety*.) There is nothing to fear for, Winnie; but only you may feel lonely.

WINNIE. Yet Foodle will stay?

LORN. Oh, yes; and the boys—all those not with me. They are sure to protect you, Winnie. You must keep them, though, from the spirits. (*Placing his hand on the closed closet backing at Left Center*.) If not, our whiskey here might play the devil inside them. So you must be careful, Winnie, to keep the closet well locked. (*Giving her a key and then another*.) I will give you this other key, too—(*Drawing out the drawer in the table backing at Left Center, and taking from it pistols attached to a belt*.) If Foodle should want you to leave here—there 'is no better guide, you know—you take out these, and wear them.

WINNIE. (*Drawing back*.) I—take?—But they might go off.

LORN. But not without you, I hope. If you go, do not leave them behind; or some one else might get them. (*Noticing WINNIE'S agitation*.) But you poor little thing, you are trembling! Perhaps, I ought not to go. Humph! What are a few thousand dollars compared to you! I will not.

WINNIE. No, Latie, you must. I came here to help you. Of course, at first, you startled me; but I would rather, a thousand times, have you go than not. And if I be trembling, it is more than half because it thrills me to think of what I can do for you—yes—so go.

LORN. (*Putting on one of two belts holding pistols, leaving another in the drawer, and giving the key of the drawer to WINNIE. A horse is heard galloping up to the door.*) A glorious girl you are Winnie. And, really, I ought to go. And the danger is only a myth—Good-bye, take care of yourself; and no anxiety, promise!

Exit—Right Second—LORN, after bidding WINNIE good-bye.

WINNIE. (*Following him to the door and filling in the time by watching him till the horse is heard galloping away, then she walks about the room.*) It is dreadful, to stay here alone, alone with those horrible drunkards, and the raiding thieves so near! And only that half-dog Foodle to take care of me, if there be danger. I wonder how far it is to the nearest ranch, and the way there. I will find out from Foodle.—Here, Foodle. (*Calling to FOODLE from the doorway at Right Second Entrance.*)

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

I want you to tell me, Foodle, how near is the nearest ranch.

FOODLE. Oh, a matter of twenty-five mile.

WINNIE. You mean the nearest large ranch. But I mean that small one nearer, the one that I saw—

FOODLE. Oh, that—but *they* don't amount to nothin'.

WINNIE. But whose house is it? Who live there?

FOODLE (*superciliously*). Why, I told you once, not so? A couple o' green young chaps.

WINNIE. They are men from the North, I believe.

FOODLE. Them green kind is, as a rule.

WINNIE (*aside*). They are Northerners.—Thanks for that! (*To FOODLE.*) How far is their house from here?

FOODLE. Ten-mile, perhaps.

WINNIE. Now, Foodle, you know I am left in your care.

FOODLE. Yes, the boss was tellin' me how I must keep an eye on you.

WINNIE. *Was* he? (*Aside.*) You expect to be master, eh? I must keep an eye on *you*. (*To FOODLE.*) Now, Foodle, you know it might happen, when you were away from here, or something of that sort, you know—

FOODLE. But I ain't a-goin' away.

WINNIE. No, of course not, Foodle, of course. But something or other might happen; and I might need to know just how to get to that house.

FOODLE. That house where the young chaps is?

WINNIE. Yes, that.

FOODLE. (*Aside.*) She's afeard o' me, yes. And I is afeard o' the young chaps. (*To WINNIE.*) So you want to know how to reach 'em?

WINNIE. If something should happen, you see.

FOODLE. Oh, yes, if somethin' should happen.

WINNIE. You can tell me, of course.

FOODLE. Oh, yes; you first goes down to the creek; and then you goes on across it. But before that you follers a path; and you's got to be mighty careful not to foller the other path there.

WINNIE. (*Taking out her note book and writing.*) Quite a number of other paths there?

FOODLE. Why, of course, there be; for you see, this land is a free one for sheep; and wherever one goes a-bleatin' a thousand goes follerin' after; and most of them goes single-file—well, after you crosses the creek, you foller another path up; and when you gets half-way through it, you turn—

WINNIE. But how can one tell when half-way through it?

FOODLE. You comes to the place where you turn.

WINNIE. Oh, the whole—the whole path turns there.

FOODLE. No—the path to where the young chaps is.

WINNIE. Does it turn to the right or the left?

FOODLE. There ain't but one way to turn when you gets to the right place! Then when you pegs on a half-mile further, you goes to the top of a hill, then a little way down toward a valley; and then you comes to a tree.

WINNIE. The only tree in the valley?

FOODLE. Oh, no; why, it's full o' trees. It's the tree that you tells the path by. (*WINNIE shakes her head despairingly.*) And when you's once in the path, you goes on till you comes to a sheep-pen.

WINNIE. And how far is the sheep-pen?

FOODLE. From here?

WINNIE. Yes, from here.

FOODLE. Oh, three or four mile.

WINNIE. Not more than half of the way? Why, Foodle, I never could find the whole way.

FOODLE. You couldn't? You couldn't? (*Pointing to WINNIE's note book.*) Not even by chalkin' it down?

WINNIE. And then, I might be obliged to go there, too, in the night.

FOODLE. (*With shrewd sham-sympathy.*) And you couldn't do that now, could you? Oh, no; I's a-feard you couldn't!

(*Sounds of shooting are heard outside.*)

Exit—Right Second—FOODLE.

Just after FOODLE exits, HARRY's face appears at the open window at the Right Center. WINNIE, seeing him, utters a slight exclamation of alarm, then rushes toward the door at the Right Second as if to call for FOODLE, then pauses and looks at HARRY.

HARRY. Wait, wait! I am not here to harm you. I am chased! Men threaten my life!—Please let me come in.

WINNIE (*going to door at Right Second*). I will. (*To herself.*) That voice! that face! I know him! I think he will not know me, though! I had my veil on. (*She opens the door, and says to HARRY.*) Come in!

Enter—Right Second—HARRY, panting hard.

WINNIE. Been running?—and what is the matter?

HARRY. Was walking with three of my friends. We saw a horse with a halter. In fun, I mounted him then; and then he began to run. I had no sort of a pull; and he failed to understand my language. All of a sudden a set of cowboys appeared. They shouted, and chased, and shot, till, at last, I dodged in behind yonder grove, jumped off, and came here. They may follow me.

WINNIE. Yes, is danger—must hide.

HARRY. But where?

WINNIE (*opening the door at Left Second*). In here. If you hear them coming, get under my dresses that hang in the closet.

(*HARRY enters the room at Left Second and WINNIE shuts its door.*)

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

WINNIE (*to FOODLE*). And what were they shooting at, Foodle?

FOODLE. The boys were chasin' a feller.

WINNIE. What kind of fellow?

FOODLE. A feller that tried to run off on a horse.

WINNIE. Did he get it?

FOODLE. Not he!—he jumped off it; and left it out here in the grove.

WINNIE. Their chase is over then, eh?

FOODLE. Is over?—No, not by a long shot! The boys want their fun.

WINNIE. What fun?

FOODLE. Why, stringin' him up.

WINNIE. How so?

FOODLE. The way that you folks call hangin'.

WINNIE. But why should they hang this man?

FOODLE. It's allers the thing out here to do to those fellers.

WINNIE. What fellows?

FOODLE. The kind as they allers hangs.

WINNIE. But who and what are the kind?

FOODLE. And you never heard tell of the fellers they allers hangs?

WINNIE. No, never.

FOODLE. The fellers as steals our horses.

WINNIE. But he didn't steal one. You have it.

FOODLE. But he wanted to, all the same! Oh, no one can blame the boys. They are used to that sort of sport. Besides they get all the clothes the man has on him. To them the best of the bundle's the wrappin'.

WINNIE. My brother would never permit a man to be hung on his ranch.

FOODLE. But when he is catched in the act!—It has to be done, you know!

WINNIE. And you think that that can be right?

FOODLE. Oh, no; not think it! I knows it.

Enter—Right Second—Three COWBOYS.

WINNIE (*to FOODLE*). And what do these men want in here?

FOODLE. They think that the man must have hid.

WINNIE. Have they looked in the barn?

FOODLE. Not yet.

WINNIE. Why not?—Why, under the hay—there are plenty of places out there to hide, and be gone before this.

COWBOY. There be!

OTHER COWBOY. There be!

FOODLE. Just so!

Exeunt—Right Second—COWBOYS and FOODLE.

WINNIE (*coming to Left Second and opening door*). For heaven's sake, what shall we do?—They will all be back in a minute.

HARRY (*appearing at the door*). Could I put on one of your dresses? I happen to have in my pocket a wig (*putting his wig on*). Am a vaudeville actor.

WINNIE. Why, yes; and exactly the thing! We are all expecting a girl—a servant-girl here from the station. Dress up in that old woolen gown (*pointing to the left, as if to something inside the room*). Is too warm to be worn by me here, so Foodle has never yet seen it. And, when you come out, remember that Foodle, and all the others have got to believe you a woman. (*Exit—Left Second—HARRY.*) (*Continuing to herself.*) And if they should find him out, I should simply be forced to tell them I know him, and know him to be not a thief but rich, very rich. and that, if *they* let him off, my brother and I will not, till we, and all of them, too, have been given a mint of money. Where we all are creatures of dust, thank God that the dust holds gold,—a gleam to hypnotize thoughts that are dazzled by light that it brings, and grow dazed and blind to all else. (*She rushes to the drawer in the table backing at Left Center.*) Hang him?—Here's the key? (*Taking the key from her pocket she opens the drawer, takes out the pistols and examines them.*) All loaded! Twelve shots, and only four men. (*Puts the belt containing the pistols around her, but under her apron, so that it cannot be seen.*) Let them dare to attempt to hang him!—But before I shot, I should—yes, I should swear to them that I love him. The men who oppose a man will sometimes yield to a woman. The toughest of them can be wounded, like crocodiles, through the eye. This gives almost any young woman a chance, where a man would fail.

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

WINNIE. Our girl is here with us, Foodle.

FOODLE. Our girl?

WINNIE. Our servant-girl, yes.

FOODLE. She footed it here from the station?

WINNIE. Oh, no, caught a ride, she said.

FOODLE (*evidently skeptical, because of the hour of the day*). On an antelope, eh?

WINNIE. Oh, no!—the train was early—an extra!

FOODLE. Should think that it were, and you, you is not afeared of her,—what?—am certain you know whom she are?

WINNIE (*lifting her apron, and exhibiting the pistols*). I shall soon make her understand which one is the mistress here. But, of course, you must wait close by, and be sure to come if I call you.

*Enter—Left Second—*HARRY, *dressed as a maid, wearing his wig and an attenuated skirt.*

WINNIE. Oh, here is our girl—our Hannah! (*Introducing her to FOODLE*). And here is our man—our Foodle. (*HARRY and FOODLE bow to one another.*)

Cries heard in the distance of O Foodle, Foodle, Foodle!

WINNIE (*to FOODLE*). They want you out at the barn,—to open the bins, perhaps. (*Speaking with an assumed air of great confidence in him.*) You must not be away too long.

*Exit—Right Second—*FOODLE.

WINNIE (*to HARRY*). You will have to help me, now, or Foodle will come back soon, and suspect and detect us both. (*She looks at HARRY, and playfully lifts her apron and shakes the pistols at him.*)

HARRY. I wish I had had those pistols; or had not left mine behind me.—But no; I should not have been here. (*To WINNIE.*) I have heard of arms before round a woman's waist; but, bless me, if ever I dreamed—

WINNIE. Be silent. I have saved your life—have a right to your gratitude.

HARRY. Have you? Boo hoo! (*Shivering.*)

WINNIE. (*In solicitude.*) You are shivering, then? Are you cold?

HARRY. (*Looking at his exposed arms and ankles.*) Am not used to being exposed—am bashful. It makes me tremble.

WINNIE. When the child of our brain gives us trouble, we must send him out into service. (*Puts a large washpan on the table, at center of stage, and puts soiled dishes in it.*)

HARRY. You mean if people be lazy they forget themselves the most, when they seem surrounded by work.

WINNIE. (*Pointing to the washpan and the dishes.*) Here, now, you can clean these dishes. I suppose you are used to it, eh?

HARRY. Oh, yes; whenever I eat, I always clean the dishes.

WINNIE. Well, go then, and get the water. (*Points to pail with water and dipper near the place of Left Third Entrance.* HARRY

begins to walk rapidly to and fro, carrying water in the dipper from the pail to the dish.)

WINNIE. *(Laughing, as she watches him.)* Do you think that I want you to train for a walking-match?—

HARRY. Why—

WINNIE. Then why not bring the whole pail at once?

HARRY. What then is the need of the dipper? *(He rushes for the pail, brings it to the front of the table, and sets it on the floor so violently that it splashes over.)*

WINNIE. See how you have spilled it; look! *(HARRY lifts the pail to pour from it into the pan.)* Not that way! See how it drips. You must use the dipper now.

HARRY. *(Putting down the pail, and taking the dipper, and flourishing it.)* A sort of Indian club for the arms—but not for the legs.

WINNIE. And not for a sprinkler, either!—You take it for holy water, and this for a church?

HARRY. *(Bowing down, as he puts the dipper in the pail.)* Why not?—My service is just beginning. *(He lifts the dipper, pouring the water into the pan that is on the table.)*

WINNIE. Wait, wait!—It will all be cold. You must get the hot water now from the kettle there. *(Pointing toward the stove. HARRY rushes to it, and takes the kettle by its handle, then drops it, and dances about blowing his fingers.)* Come, come! No place for dancing here! but for serious work.

HARRY. Yes, yes. I should think so—*seared* my fingers. They are looking like autumn leaves.

WINNIE. Oh, burned your fingers, have you?—You ought to have used the holder. *(Handing him the holder from the table near the place of Left Second Entrance.)*

HARRY. Ah, that way! Yes, I see. So, so; that is easy enough! *(He takes the tea-kettle to the table, and pours the hot water into the wash-pan, but awkwardly, letting the kettle swing round and burn the hand that is holding it.)*

WINNIE. It is?

HARRY. No, no! it is fearful! *(Suddenly placing the kettle on the white table cloth, and burning it.)*

WINNIE. *(Snatching up the kettle without using the holder, and pointing to the table-cloth.)* You are right. I should think it was!—You have ruined it now forever. *(She pours the water from the kettle into the wash-pan. While she is doing this, HARRY notices that he still holds the holder. He offers it to her. She shakes her head refusing it, then feels the water in the wash-pan.)* Just warm enough, I think! *(She replaces the kettle on the stove.)*

HARRY. *(Looking at the holder in his hand, then at her; then cautiously feeling the water in the wash-pan, and suddenly drawing his hand back.)* Are you a salamander?

WINNIE. *(Looking around from the stove, shaking her head and laughing.)* No; you are a goosy-gander.

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

FOODLE. Some strangers out here, Miss Lorn. They says as they wants to see you.

Exeunt—Right Second—WINNIE and FOODLE.

HARRY. (*To himself.*) Aha, Miss Lorn, I seem (*several times, as if experimenting puts hand in water and draws it out suddenly*) to be getting into hot-water. Our game of hide and seek may turn to a game of tag.

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE, who moves toward the Left Upper Entrance, also WINNIE and FIRST, SECOND and THIRD SINGERS. The SINGERS exchange signals of recognition with HARRY, but they seem not to have full confidence in WINNIE.

Exit—Left Upper—FOODLE.

WINNIE (*to HARRY*). I have found a traveling band of singers outside. They are going to give me a song for their dinner.

SINGERS SING.

Chorus:

Ah, boys, when we fill our glasses,
We may drink to whatever else passes,
But whenever we quaff to life's better half,
We must always drink to the lasses.

(*During the chorus, and the following interlude, HARRY begins to dance. The SINGERS start out to join in his fun by dancing with him.*)

SINGER. You may journey to Nice or to Paris
For a cough that a song may embarrass;
But the air of the West is the freshest and best;
And the sweetest, the air of its heiress.

Chorus: The sweetest the air of its heiress;
Ah, boys, when we fill our glasses, etc.

(*While Dancing, HARRY slaps one of the SINGERS on the shoulder, or puts his arm around him. The SINGER sings the next stanza.*)

SINGER. There was a lone man on a May-day,
He came to the wilds of a hey-day;
But when he got there, instead of a bear,
He found himself hugged by a la-dy.

Chorus: He found himself hugged by a la-dy.
Ah, boys, when we fill our glasses, etc.

HARRY. There was a young man that I know,
Who cried for a "Westward Ho."
Because his yeast he had left in the east,
And he wanted a po-ta-to.

Chorus: He wanted a po-ta-to.
Ah, boys, when we fill our glasses, etc.

(Other verses suited to the times may be introduced.)

Enter—Left Upper—FOODLE. He looks suspiciously at HARRY.)

FOODLE. *(To WINNIE.)* They can wash up now, if they wants to.

(WINNIE leads the SINGERS to the door at Left Upper Entrance. HARRY takes the hand-towel hanging near the Left Upper Entrance, and, shrinking from the heat of the water, draws a plate from the wash-pan, rubs the plate, looks at it, and makes motions of writing on it with his finger.)

Exit—Right Second—FOODLE.

Exeunt—Left Upper—The SINGERS.

WINNIE. *(Coming toward HARRY.)* And what is the matter now?

HARRY. I was thinking about this plate. One *thinks* when he writes, does he not?

WINNIE. Some write because their thoughts are running out of their brain.

HARRY. *(Showing her the grease-lines on the plate.)* But look—it is very strange!

WINNIE. Oh, no; it is very common!

HARRY. In a climate like this, I suppose, so many things sweat—

WINNIE. Better say there are so many things that are lazy. *(Pointing to plate.)* It has not been half rubbed yet.

HARRY. *(Looking incredulous, then feeling the muscles of his arm.)* Well, I would rather—

WINNIE. Be hung?—Why, what is this that you have?—The hand-towel, as I live! *(Taking from him the towel that he has been using, then giving it back to him and pointing to a slop-pail on the floor.)* Come here, wring it out over this. *(HARRY tries awkwardly to wring it.)* You awkward! Wring it in this way. *(She wrings it, and hands it back to him.)*

HARRY. *(Trying to imitate her, but not succeeding.)* In this way, you say?

WINNIE. Tut, tut! I shall have to do it myself. Meantime, you can help get ready the rice for dinner. *(She takes the towel from him, and hanging it where it hung before, points to the dish containing rice which is on the shelf near the place of the Right Third Entrance.)*

HARRY. How much?

WINNIE. (*Crossing to the other side of the room and arranging something.*) Enough for a dinner for six.

HARRY. Humph, humph! At last I have something I know how to do. Let me see—they have few things else to feed on. Suppose I give each a bowl-full. (*Looks at the rice as if he thought there were very little of it; then pours it all into an empty can and pours water over it.*)

WINNIE. (*Returning and looking into the pan in which he has put the rice.*) Why, what in the world are you doing?

HARRY. Getting ready the rice.

WINNIE. You think we feed all the cattle on rice?

HARRY. Why should I?

WINNIE. You think you must boil all that for only six people?

HARRY. Yes, nevertheless.

WINNIE. If you were better acquainted with rice, you would know how much it could swell.

HARRY. Could swell?—I thought that rice was very simple in taste. I never dreamed of finding a swell in it—How could I?

(WINNIE puts a pan on another chair, which she draws near the chair on which is the pan filled with rice and water. Then she goes to the closet near the place of Left Third Entrance and takes from it a sieve-ladle. While she is doing this, HARRY begins with his hands scooping the rice out of one pan and into the other, all the while spilling water on the floor.)

WINNIE. (*Returning with the sieve, and looking at the wet floor.*)

If I am a salamander, I take it that you are a fish. You expect me to wade like a crane? Take this here and scrub the floor.

(*She flings onto the floor the towel near the Left Upper Entrance.*)

HARRY looks at the towel dubiously. (*She laughs.*) I must teach you housekeeping now. Get down on your knees.

HARRY. Is that the way to begin it?

WINNIE. (*Laughing.*) Yes.

HARRY. (*Getting on his knees and looking mockingly at her.*)

I had heard so; and what do you say?

WINNIE. Impertinent!—Have a care!

(*Sounds of disputing voices are heard.*)

HARRY. (*Rising.*) I have—but I think for you.

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

FOODLE. Them boys as has searched the barn is a comin' to search in here; and they swears to get at the grog.

WINNIE. But, Foodle, they must be stopped.

FOODLE. That is easier said than done.

Exit—Right Second—FOODLE.

HARRY. What is it?

WINNIE. (*To HARRY.*) He says that the boys are coming to get at the whiskey. And my brother, when going away, said that this was the one chief thing that we must prevent their doing.

HARRY. And where do you keep the whiskey?

WINNIE. (*Pointing to the closet near Left Center.*) In there, and the keys in my pocket. (*She shows the keys.*)

HARRY. You keep them, and give me the pistols. (*He takes the two pistols from her belt.*) If I had had these before, the boys might never have chased me (*turning to one side, cocking the pistols, and speaking to himself*); nor I, perhaps, have been caught.

WINNIE. (*Evidently alarmed.*) Be careful. They might go off.

HARRY. Afraid of them, eh?—then your fright for me must have been very great, when you put them on!—I thank you. (*Mainly to himself, as he examines the pistols.*) Let them break up our tête-à-tête here, I never could hit a barn door; but I guess, by the time we get through, we shall scatter a lot of darn bores!

WINNIE. I must call the singers to help you.

Exit—Left Upper—WINNIE.

Enter—Right Second—COWBOYS, followed by FOODLE.

HARRY (*to the COWBOYS*). Well, men, and what do you want?

COWBOY. We are comin' here after some grog.

Enter—Left Upper—WINNIE.

HARRY. And if you return to your quarters, perhaps you will get it,—that is, if the lady in charge here will give it.

LEADER. Oh, ho! Well you ain't no lady. (*Makes motions as if to go toward the closet at Left Center in front of which stands WINNIE.*)

HARRY. I am not, but she is. If you take a single step further, I shoot. (*He points both pistols at the men. At the same moment.*)

Enter—Left Upper—THE SINGERS.

(*They pull out pistols and point them at the COWBOYS.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE: *The same as in Act II. The curtain rising reveals the FIRST, SECOND and THIRD SINGERS sitting around the table, and FOODLE near the Right Second Entrance.*

Enter—Left Second—HARRY.

(*He is clothed like a woman, as in the latter part of Act II, and carries in his hands the man's suit worn by him in the earlier part of that Act.*)

HARRY (to FOODLE). Here, Foodle, these are the things that Miss Lorn thought ought to be cleaned. They are dirty, no doubt of it!—Humph! I had a hard ride. Hurry up! I want to get out of this gender (*looking at himself*) as quick as I can.

FOODLE (*taking the man's suit*). All right, sir.

Exit—Right Second—FOODLE.

HARRY (*to the SINGERS, as he looks at his own attire*). The one thing no man can do, is to *outstrip* a woman in dressing. Not so anxious, perhaps, to be an angel, and put on airs, when these drafts that we feel on earth have drafted us up to heaven. No wonder, the women surpass us in not getting hard or tipsy. Truth is they are tough by nature, and get *tight* in ways and stays—I wonder if squeezing the blood keeps it warm. That might explain why their arms and necks never freeze. (*Gesturing toward his legs, breast and arms, and walking about.*) I feel like a turkey-gobbler hung up in front of a shop, with neck and wings and legs all plucked, and what feathers are left, bunched up in a tuft at the middle. It is all like a goblin-dream—a dream in a German hotel, with an eiderdown pillow that covers one's trunk, and leaves his limbs all raying out toward the frost to be warmed by his fervor of speech and a wish to get at that German—though, at least, we must give him credit for never lying, by calling that pillow a comfortable. (*Putting his hand to his waist and breast, then trying to bring two separated sides of his dress at the waist together.*) No, no; it is not becoming. It never will be coming. But some one else is, I guess. (*Looking toward Left Upper Entrance, and making an awkward pose before the mirror.*) No wonder she always meets me with a smile on her face. The mirror is always doing the same.

Enter—Left Upper—WINNIE.

(*The SINGERS rise. She brings a tray holding a pitcher and four glasses. She places them on the table, and, apparently, pours out lemonade..*)

The SINGERS gather round her, and drink.

FIRST SINGER. We ought to be leaving, Miss Lorn. You are not prepared for keeping a boarding-house.

WINNIE. But my brother would wish you to wait till he came.
The cowboys, you know—

FIRST SINGER. They never would fight with the four of us, would they? No danger for Harry, I think!

HARRY. But what of the danger for her? The cowboys are here, and the grog; and if we were gone—

FIRST SINGER. I see. Of course, we ought to stay on.

WINNIE (*shrugging her shoulders*). If you need to be going—

FIRST SINGER. Not yet. We promised to sing you that song.
(*The SINGERS sing some popular chorus.*)

WINNIE. I thank you so much. Had I nothing to do, I could listen all day. (*She places the pitcher and glasses on the tray, and starts with it toward the Left Upper Entrance. HARRY follows, and opens the door.*)

Exeunt—Left Upper—WINNIE and HARRY.

FIRST SINGER (*looking after them*). Since Harry put on that dress, I have fallen in love with him, fellows.

SECOND SINGER. How is it with some one else?

FIRST SINGER. Better ask how is it with him! Were he not engaged to Betsy, I should say he had fallen in love.

SECOND SINGER. But, of course, that could not be,—any more than if he were married!

FIRST SINGER. That may seem a joke to you; but Harry is too conscientious,—would never propose to an angel, if, before he got sight of her, he had promised to marry Betsy.

THIRD SINGER. I think we ought to get out, and give them a chance

SECOND SINGER (*pointing to the right*). Suppose we go over there to the shed—has a table and bench,—just the thing for a game of cards. What say you?

THIRD SINGER. Say yes.

FIRST SINGER. Yes, give them a chance!

Exeunt—Right Second—The three SINGERS.

Enter—Left Upper—HARRY and WINNIE.

(*WINNIE locks the door, and puts the key in her pocket.*)

WINNIE. When we go out for a walk, I have to leave this locked. Our provisions are all in here. (*She takes her hat from one of the pegs, as if to put it on; then goes to the window at the Right Center, and, pointing out, says:*) I like to watch the sheep coming home—a beautiful sight! At first you notice they look like a low, stone fence on the top of the distant hill; and then flock on till the whole of the hill is gray as a ledge of marble; but when nearer they look like a wedge. Last night I rode out on a donkey; and, when I had met them and turned, they all ran sweeping behind me, like the white and spreading train of a long trailed wedding dress.

HARRY. It is not the first time, my lady, that a donkey's bridle has led a wedding train on toward a halter.

WINNIE. Does everything seem to you ridiculous?

HARRY. Oh, no; some things are not like myself.

WINNIE. Are you so?

HARRY (*looking at himself in the mirror*). Do you think me anything else? But, of course, I ought to seem so. I am so sincere.

WINNIE. So what?

HARRY. So what I said, sincere. The ridiculous is the incongruous. In society, as we all know, sincerity is incongruous; and so, if only sincere, we shall seem ridiculous, too.

WINNIE. I had thought that it was your gown.

HARRY. You could think the same of the gown of a priest, a judge, or professor; it may be ridiculous, yet helps most men to think them sincere.

WINNIE. I must think that, too, then, of you.

HARRY. You must—so little to hide in! They say the style is the man. I am wondering whether my style could ever make me a woman. (*Looking into the mirror.*) I am no more graceful in this than I was when I had on more.

WINNIE. One has to learn to be graceful.

HARRY. And I have never learned it, have I?—Do you think, if I kept right on exposing myself like this till my blushes had heated me through, in spite of where I was bagged, I should take on grace, at last, as a bag-pudding takes on a crust?

WINNIE. Oh, no; no man can be crusty and graceful! One has to keep moving. (*Making movements with her hands and arms.*)

HARRY (*evidently charmed by her movements*). And yielding, you think?—Go on! You must have practiced Delsarte. Go on, and teach me to do it. (*Music of the orchestra, while WINNIE makes Delsarte gymnastic movements, and HARRY tries awkwardly to imitate her.*)

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE.

FOODLE. Oh, Miss; it is raining just like a thousand o' bricks—not here but upon yon hill; and a man and a couple o' women is comin' a-drivin' a-down the hill, like a boulder rolled by a cyclone—

WINNIE. How soon will they get here?

FOODLE. Close by; and all wet through to the skin!

WINNIE. They must come right in then; and, Foodle, you see to their horses, of course.

Exit—Right Second—FOODLE.

HARRY (*starting to follow FOODLE*). I must change my clothes.

WINNIE. Too late! They will see you in both your suits.

HARRY. Then what shall I do?

WINNIE (*laughing*). What do?—behave yourself—like a woman.

HARRY. It was well enough with the singers; but these that are coming are neighbors. Will it do for me to be found with you dressed up like this?

WINNIE. You need not expose yourself.

HARRY (*looking at his arms and neck*). Could I be exposed much more?

WINNIE (*laughing*). They never would know what you were.

HARRY (*looking into the mirror and adjusting his wig*). I never should know myself. (*Speaking falsetto*.) Shall I speak to them high like this?

WINNIE (*laughing*). Oh, nonsense! You might forget, and drop—and break—your voice.

HARRY. And so reveal the baseness of the lower range for which alone such as I am fitted. (*Placing his hand on his breast*.) My female aspirations, or, say, my respirations, must not forget they are *stayed*; and so must needs preserve the even tenor—

Enter—Right Second—FOODLE, leaving door behind him open.

Confusion! It is Betsy, Alice and Gall.

FOODLE. (*To the party outside the door*.) Just tumble along in, Misses; this tub of ourn, as I reckon, can hold you, water and all.

Enter—Right Second—BETSY, ALICE and GALL. FOODLE goes on to GALL.

And you, if you wants to strip, just peel off there in the yard.

GALL (*to FOODLE*). Is Lorn not here?

FOODLE. Not today—has gone off to catch some raiders.

GALL. Then don't you tell the ladies that this ranch belongs to him; because I want to surprise them when we come to see him later.

Exit—Right Second—FOODLE.

(BETSY, ALICE and GALL *move toward the stove*.)

BETSY. (*Gesturing toward FOODLE*.) An exceeding vulgar creature!—a very low set, here, I guess.

ALICE. (*Looking toward WINNIE and HARRY*.) Sh—sh!—They might overhear you.

BETSY. (*Sarcastically and petulantly*.) They might?—and what if they did? (WINNIE and HARRY *place chairs about the stove*.)

WINNIE. Take seats?

HARRY. And dry yourselves.

BETSY. (*Looking sharply at HARRY, then seating herself and speaking to ALICE, who seats herself in the chair held by WINNIE*.)

No wonder they send out here for monstrosities for our museums!

ALICE. Sh—sh!—

BETSY. Why, what did I say? I was talking, you know, about cattle.

HARRY. (*To himself, while crossing to rear of the table at center of the stage, where he busies himself with crockery and listens*.) I am not to be flattered by her; but, at least, can flatter myself that my true self has not been revealed.

GALL (*to BETSY*). The storm is over, I see. Would we better be riding on? Our climate is dryer than yours. You will not take cold, I guess.

BETSY. Men's guesses are like their gifts. I have found they are often bait on a hook and line thrown out to draw inward toward themselves. I suppose you want to go on.

GALL. Well, Betsy, and what if I do?

BETSY. You have lived here so long, I presume, you are dry and crusty enough to escape being all soaked through by a week of floods. But for me—

ALICE. Oh, Betsy, but now, you know—

BETSY. It turned out, precisely the way that I said that it would, this morning. The clouds were gathering then. And yet you both would come.

ALICE. You wanted to see the cascade far more than I did, Betsy.

BETSY. Oh, yes, of course, of course! I am always the one to blame.

GALL. If you prefer, we will stay.

Exit—Right Second—GALL, bowing first to WINNIE and ALICE.

WINNIE. If you will excuse me, ladies, I will look in one of my trunks and find, if I can, a change of clothing for you.

Exit—Left Second—WINNIE.

HARRY. (*To himself.*) Good grief! And when the clothing arrives. I fear I may blush to see it.

ALICE. (*To BETSY, as she looks around the room.*) What a cozy, snug little place?

BETSY. A cozy and snug! I should think so. It smells just like a hired girl's room.

HARRY. (*Aside.*) She is on the scent for me now.

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*) Why will you always be thinking of such unsavory things?

HARRY. (*To himself.*) Is she always thinking of me?

BETSY. Dear me!

HARRY. (*To himself.*) I see it. She is.

BETSY. (*To ALICE.*) Dear me! Humph! "Why will you always?"—a characteristic question.

ALICE. Why, Betsy, I beg your pardon—you know I meant no offense.

BETSY. The mean are mean without meaning. You might talk, at least, ten minutes without insulting some one.

HARRY. (*To himself.*) Oho!—Rather sharp, Miss Betsy!—If one had a phonograph now to catch and shoot back your words, the insult might not come from Alice.

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*) But, Betsy, I merely thought the suggestion was not the most pleasant.

BETSY. Blame the room that suggested it then; but, likely enough, not to you. I was not brought up as you were.

ALICE. Our house was smaller than yours; but my mother, I think, was a lady.

BETSY. (*Sarcastically.*) And mine, I suppose, was not! At least, I was taught to be clean.

ALICE. You could hardly expect things here to be just as they are in New York. We came because they were not so.

BETSY. Oh, yes, my fault, always mine! Heaven knows I will not come again.

ALICE. What, what?—not if Harry came with you?

HARRY. (*Who has evidently been getting more and more provoked, to himself.*) The Old Harry always comes with her.

BETSY. You think, I suppose, I am just as silly as you—

ALICE. I should scarcely say being in love was silly.

BETSY. You are perfectly well aware that if I am anything, Alice, I am sensible—practical, too.

ALICE. And I—did I hint you were not?

BETSY. You implied it, at least; and you know that Harry is rich; very rich; and easily managed, besides; and so, a sensible match—

HARRY. (*To himself.*) That presently may strike fire. I begin to feel like a boy who is going to school to be licked. Is that the way our brides kiss us? (*Makes a movement with his tongue.*)

ALICE. Of course it is; and I said so—that you were in love with him.

BETSY. Humph! But that is a different thing.

HARRY. (*To himself.*) What my old school-marm used to say, when trying to make me spell.

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*) But *he* is in love with you.

BETSY. That, too, is a different thing.

HARRY. (*To himself.*) Oh, my!—but this school-marm here seems trying to *break me spell*.

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*) He thinks you in love with him, too.

BETSY. (*To ALICE.*) And what if he does think that? Give a woman a pair of eyes and bring almost any man near her, he will see his image inside them, an image exceedingly small, an image, too, upside down. But a man never saw any image inside those eyes but his own.

HARRY. (*To himself.*) The devil!—could see his own there.

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*) It is well for you, Miss Betsy, that Harry did not hear that.

HARRY. (*To himself.*) And well for him that he did.

BETSY. And what if he did? I tell you one beck with my little finger, and Harry would kneel here—

HARRY. (*Whistling.*) Whew!

BETSY. Did you hear that woman whistle?—the most disagreeable thing! Such eyes, and mouth, and nose.—And such a voice, too, ugh, ugh! One would fancy her born and cradled out here on a ranch, and forever asleep on it, catching cold, and every night growing hoarser by snoring.

ALICE. Sh—sh!—Why she can hear you; and you—you might hurt her feelings.

BETSY. (*Laughing sarcastically.*) Then why should she listen?

HARRY. (*To himself.*) To have rare dreams of the future. I fancy that now I am wedded and dressed even less than I am, attending my evening lecture.

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*) But you and I are to stay here; and she might not wait on us.

BETSY. Oh! How much you do know about servants!—Will show you.—(*To HARRY.*)—Here, girl, come here and help me off with my gown. I will pay you for it, you know. (*BETSY rises. HARRY looks at her without moving. She continues to ALICE.*) Did you ever see mortal so stupid?

ALICE. Perhaps she is deaf. I hope so; and so has not overheard. (*HARRY turns to Left Upper Entrance and tries the door, which is locked.*)

BETSY. Instead of coming to us, she seems to be going away.

HARRY. (*To himself.*) Door locked? (*Looking toward Left Second.*) I suppose she is making some change of her own in there.

BETSY (*speaking loud, as if to a deaf person*). Come here, do you understand me?—Come here, and unhook my gown.

HARRY. (*To himself, as he turns and feels in the drawer under the closed closet backing at Left Center.*) Could I only find the key, I would take out a bottle and sip, and pretend to be drunk.

ALICE. (*To BETSY.*) Oh, Betsy! We could do the thing for ourselves, in half the time it would take to try to get her to do it.

BETSY. Well, I have begun with this girl, and I propose to carry it through. We shall see how deaf she may be. Come here, and take off my gown! (*She goes up to HARRY and takes his hand, as if to carry it to the neck of her gown.*)

HARRY. If I take off your gown, I shall peel the skin off with it, too, I shall; and make you, from head to foot, as red as a beet, I shall.

(*ALICE in fright rises and moves toward Right Second Entrance.*)

Enter—Right Second—GALL.

BETSY. (*Catching sight of GALL, and thereupon becoming bold.*) You ugly, insolent creature!—You know no better than that?—To talk like that to a lady?—

HARRY. Oh, a lady, are you, a lady!

BETSY. A lady, yes, from New York.

HARRY. (*Bowing and speaking sarcastically.*) I am glad that you told me of that. I should never have guessed it, never. I was not brought up as you were—not used to your lady-like ways.

BETSY. Not used to it, eh? take this! (*Slapping HARRY on the cheek.*)

ALICE. Oh, Betsy, Betsy, stop!—You will get us all into trouble.

BETSY. Who cares a fig if I do? (*Looking at GALL, who also seems to protest.*) I say I shall make that woman take off my gown, I shall.

Enter—Left Second—WINNIE.

HARRY. (*Suddenly pulling off his wig.*) You will not. You shall keep it on.

(*BETSY shrieks and sinks into a chair. ALICE and WINNIE rush to assist her.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE: *Same as in Act I.*

(*The curtain rising, discloses HARRY and the FIRST, SECOND and THIRD SINGERS. They are sitting or standing around the table where they have, evidently, been eating or drinking.*)

FIRST SINGER. I like to get back where I have been.

HARRY. You never can get back there, the world keeps whirling around, and grinding out something new.

FIRST SINGER. There is nothing new here.

HARRY. Who knows?

FIRST SINGER. The mountains, at least, are the same.

SECOND SINGER. And their echoes.

THIRD SINGER. Come, start them again.

THEY SING:

Our lives are vapors forced to roam,
Of sun and storm the prey;
But cling like mists, with hills their home,
Together while they may.

Chorus: And friends, whate'er may come to you,
Join hand and voice with mine,
And swear the love that here we knew,
Shall never know decline.

Our lives are vapors, whirled through skies,
Where some by storms are torn,
And some the sunlight glorifies,
And some to heaven are borne.

Chorus: But friends, whate'er may come to you, etc.

Our lives are vapors wrecked and lost.
None sail their journey through.
Ere long behind some blow that tost,
Will naught be left but blue.

Chorus: But friends, whate'er may come to you, etc.

FIRST SINGER. We must wait a full hour, I find. Suppose that we take a walk.

SECOND SINGER. A good suggestion!

THIRD SINGER. Yes.

Exeunt—Right Second—The three SINGERS.

Enter—Right Third—WINNIE.

HARRY (turning to WINNIE). You have come?

WINNIE. I said that we should. (*Handing him a package which she holds.*) The letters you left on the ranch were not lost after all. My brother had put them in one of his pockets. I have brought them to you.

HARRY (*taking the letters and putting them into his pocket*). I thank you; and more for your riding so far to bid us good-bye.

WINNIE. The thanks are due from us, not from you.

HARRY. How so?

WINNIE. For saving the ranch from the boys when they wanted the whiskey.

HARRY. It was you that had first saved me. And, Miss Lorn, do you know I am thinking that you have been saving me, too, not alone from those threatening men, but threatening—

WINNIE. What?

HARRY. No matter! Had you heard that I was engaged?

WINNIE. Mr. Gall has told me about it.

HARRY. And told you who was the lady?

WINNIE. His neice, he said—Miss Blinder.

HARRY. But you know the row that we had?

WINNIE. We ought not to talk about her.

HARRY. But you were the one to blame.

WINNIE. But I—I had no means—

HARRY. I got—nothing mean from you—were responsible nevertheless.

WINNIE. For what?

HARRY. My appearance in skirts. You know how it mortified me. Can that which is mortified live?—Is it strange, if my love felt widowed? My suit was not a success with her. How was it with you?—Do you understand—with you? (*Taking her hand. WINNIE draws back.*) Do you like me best in—kilts?—I am going away today—may not see you again for years.

WINNIE. Of course, we had a good time; but when you get back to the East, are you perfectly sure that a man of the world like you—

HARRY. I am sure that a man of the world like me should have found all the sport that he wants with *gamboling* lambs all about and a *Paradise*—

WINNIE. Joking now!

HARRY. Oh, no; I am not—just try me. I should like to be tried for my life—as the ranch hands threatened; and tied by ranch hands, too, that I know of. (*Taking one of her hands in each of his.*)

WINNIE. But *they* set you free.

HARRY. Not so; they made me a slave.

WINNIE. Not quite. When this whim of yours goes by, I know you will think me wise for checking you now. You have given your heart to Betsy.

HARRY. And she has flung it a long way off.

WINNIE. You try her again. She will take it.

HARRY. And if she will not, will you? (*WINNIE hesitates.*) If I were to find my heart left out in the cold like that, could I come and ask you again?

WINNIE. You know I have promised my brother to stay with him here three years.

HARRY. He would let you off.

WINNIE. If he should, he is one of those men who needs to have some one with him. You see, he is pulling me one way, and Betsy is pulling you—

HARRY. No, not Betsy; she has no pull on me now.

WINNIE. It seems as if Providence meant that we should be parted.

HARRY. If Betsy be Providence, yes; but that is a dispensation, I think, of Providence with which we ourselves can dispense.

(*Enter—Left Second—FOODLE.*) Well, Foodle?

FOODLE. It would be a mighty good thing if some of you folks could tell which baggage here is your own.

Exit—Left Second—FOODLE.

HARRY. Just what I wanted to know. Come help us to solve the problem.

Exeunt—Left Second—WINNIE and HARRY.

Enter—Left Upper—GALL, with hat and boots, and ALICE, in traveling costume.

ALICE. I fear that Harry and Betsy will never make up.

GALL. So do I. When a woman blows out at a man she runs about as much chance of not uprooting his love as a cyclone of not uprooting a twig it begins to twist.

ALICE. I have just received a note which shows that our friends at home were set on the match. You know that Betsy has nothing.

GALL. I know; and is likely now to get more of the same commodity.

ALICE. Yes; and yet I should like to help the friends at home, if I could; or, at least, to say I had tried it. But what can we do?

GALL. (*Shrugging his shoulders.*) Why you, perhaps, you might talk to her, Alice.

ALICE. You think, then, that she would listen?

GALL. Of course, always talking herself!—It is hard to blow at a gale. We might both of us tackle Merriman.

ALICE. And both of us might be thrown.

GALL. I fear that we might. But there—she is coming, I see; and yonder (*looking toward Left Second Entrance*) is Merriman, too. Suppose you try to blow up the one, while I blow down the other; it may even the temperature, when the two are brought together.

Exit—Left Second—GALL.

Enter—Left Upper—BETSY.

BETSY. (*To ALICE.*) I thank the heavens, at last, we have left that stuffy old ranch; and are nearer to civilization. But, for one, I fail to see why *they* should have followed us here.

ALICE. Who are they?

BETSY. The Lorns.—You know.

ALICE. What would you have had them do?

BETSY. Stay back on the ranch with their cows and sheep and dogs and asses,—stay back where they both belong.

ALICE. But *we* are about to leave, and they wanted to be polite.

BETSY. Some people are always wanting to be the thing they are not. They must think me one of those fools who can only judge of a man by the way he seems on the surface.

ALICE. Why so?—You made a mistake about Harry, of course; but then—

BETSY. What then? You know there are people whose memories act like sinks. You may flush and flood and scrub them. They keep on catching and holding what only makes them a nuisance.

ALICE. And so with *me*, eh, Betsy? But you ought, yourself, to remember that Layton—

BETSY. Oh, yes, that Layton came here to see you off, of course! No wonder if all he can see in his barn of a home is that sister!—Is one thing I wish you would do.

ALICE. What is it?

BETSY. See Harry, and tell him what Layton just told us.

ALICE. What was it?

BETSY. That both of them knew who he was. And you know what *that* means, Alice. They both of them knew he was rich. She was flirting with him in the way that a fisherman flirts with a fly—just trying to catch him.

ALICE. Oh, Betsy; but Layton did not mean that! He was merely explaining why he was willing that Winnie should know him.

BETSY. And marry him, too—for his money! And Harry should learn it.

ALICE. But I could never say that to him.

BETSY. Why?

ALICE. It might not be true, and besides—you know what I think of Layton.

BETSY. Think more of him than of me. You do; you know that you do.

Enter—Left Upper—GALL.

GALL. Why, what is the matter? You seem put out.

BETSY. Yes; I am put out. A dog could hardly feel more so kicked off from his master's doorway, when coming home for a supper. She poses, Miss Alice, here, does, as a cousin, a relative, yes; and yet when I venture to make her the only request as, I think, that I ever have made, she refuses.

GALL. (*Looking toward ALICE.*) What was it?

ALICE. She wanted me, Uncle, to make Mr. Merriman think that Winnie was wanting to wed him because she wanted his money.

GALL. But how could you know about that?

BETSY. Why, Layton, he knew him, and told her.

GALL. Knew what, and he told her what?—any more than you knew, Betsy, when you were engaged to him, eh?

BETSY. I am still engaged to him, Uncle.

GALL. Of course!

BETSY. He must not forget it. If he should, I tell you, uncle—

I want you to tell him, too—as a man, my guardian here—I never shall let him off, never; but sue him for breach of promise.

GALL. So if Winnie can get his money by wedding him you, my dear, can get it without that, eh?

BETSY. I could win my case.

GALL. Quite likely!—The engagement was very well known; but if I were you, I should first try making it up with himself. In paths where men and women go opposite ways and meet, I have seldom known of a woman who could not get around a man; but she seldom could get around a man she began by fighting.

ALICE. I think that uncle is right. You should try to make up with Harry. At times, a trouble like this when coming between old friends, which, if cherished, would turn out a bomb to burst and blast all love, if treated as merely a joke will explode, and end in a laugh.

BETSY. But I see nothing to laugh at. He insulted us both so grossly.

It is hardly once in a life time, that one could be more insulted; he made us think him a servant. It was all his fault.

ALICE. Perhaps he may judge it so, himself. You can treat it as half a joke, and half a mistake, you know.

BETSY. It was all a mistake—and his—his putting on that girl's gown; and staying with her alone!—a bold, bad girl that she is.

ALICE. But if she be bold and bad, he had a good chance, at least, to find it out, you know.

BETSY. So you are defending him, eh?—I had not supposed coming West was about to corrupt you, too.

ALICE. But the reasons have all been explained.

BETSY. Not a word, would I believe, that either of them could say.

Not a word—you know it, too! You are just as bad as they are. *(Beginning to cry.)*

ALICE. Come, Betsy, come, cheer up. When you reach New York, once more, the people will be to your taste.

BETSY. They will not go sneaking around dressed up like girls.

GALL. *(Aside.)* No, no; how fortunate! If they did, very few of them might marry. *(To BETSY.)* This is merely a matter of taste. I, Betsy, although a man, would very much rather have seen a live man dressed like a girl than a dead man stript of his clothes that the cowboys had stolen away.

BETSY. *(Indignantly.)* You horrid!

GALL. It would have been one, if not the other, I take it. *(Enter*

—*Left Second*—HARRY.) But here is your friend. He has come to make up, perhaps; and, Alice, I want you here for a moment.

Exeunt—Right Second—ALICE and GALL.

HARRY. (To BETSY.) We have been good friends.

BETSY. (*Embarrassed and hypocritically.*) Yes, yes; it is good of you, Harry, it is, to come and make up, once more, such a joke, you know, such a joke!

HARRY. A practical joke; yes, yes!

BETSY. And you really thought it was not?

HARRY. (*With concealed sarcasm.*) Oh, no; I thought that it was.

BETSY. (*Rather suspiciously.*) And so see something to laugh at?

HARRY. (*Looking at her.*) Oh, yes; I see something to laugh at.

BETSY. Yes, Harry, of course; it is like you, I felt you could see the joke. (*Artificially.*) And all will be just the same as if you had been always a man, you bad thing, and I—

HARRY. A lady?

BETSY. You have always known, now, Harry, how much I have thought of you, yes?

HARRY. You used some very strange language about me there on the ranch.

BETSY. But I was provoked, you know.

HARRY. I see.—Are you often provoked?

BETSY. I lost myself, then; and you—

HARRY. I discovered you?

BETSY. (*With a decided change of manner.*) Well, I suppose you think it an honest thing to disguise yourself, and listen to what was meant for another.

HARRY. The lightning from a clear sky never burst upon one more quickly than you upon me in that guise. How could I have been more embarrassed? This fact, at first, and then the drift of what you were saying made explanations from me impossible. Who could have made them—without being too impolite?

BETSY. And yet you could be insulting?

HARRY. Now, pardon me, but Miss Blinder, you were first insulting to me.

BETSY. To you—oh, no!—to the servant.

HARRY. True courtesy shows itself to the least as well as the greatest. If once a lady then always.

BETSY. If once a gentleman, always—

HARRY. What I tried to prevent, when first I came on you dressed as a girl, I did not prevent. My appearance I see disenchanted you; yes.

BETSY. Yes.

HARRY. Then, for one, if it had to happen, thank God that it came when it did!

BETSY. I suppose that, too, is polite.

Enter—Right Third—the WAITER, ringing a bell.

Exit—Right Third—WAITER.

Enter—Left Second—the FIRST, SECOND and THIRD SINGERS.

Enter—Right Second—GALL.

HARRY. (*Gesturing toward Right Third, and offering BETSY his arm.*) Shall I take you in to the table?

BETSY (*drawing back stiffly*). I prefer to go by myself; and I want you to understand that I never intend to speak to you again in my life.

HARRY (*walking to the left Second, where are the SINGERS*). I think that better accords with the way in which she was brought up.

FIRST SINGER (*to HARRY*). She meant it?

HARRY. I think so.

FIRST SINGER. Why, then, your engagement?—

HARRY. She broke it.

FIRST SINGER. Poor fellow!

HARRY. When some things break, you know, they bring—

FIRST SINGER. A wrench?—

HARRY. No; a snap.

Exeunt—Left Second—HARRY and SINGERS.

GALL (*to BETSY, who has joined him at the Right. He gestures, as he speaks, toward the SINGERS*). They heard what you said, Miss Betsy. No breach of promise case now!

BETSY. I wonder I ever gave him a civil word in my life!

GALL. I guess he wonders the same. Truth is, you were off your guard; the door of your heart stood ajar.

BETSY. You mean—

GALL. I mean, Miss Betsy, that all your talk to that servant, and of that servant and Harry, was not—

BETSY. He insulted me so!

GALL. Perhaps he never had learned what a woman takes for an insult. He has never been married, you know.

BETSY. You are getting sarcastic, uncle. How could I be civil to him?—a man half-dressed, and in skirts.

GALL. A true lady never is civil to one on account of his dress. For my part, I wish that all men, who ever expect to be married, could get into a woman's clothes before they get into her clutches.

BETSY. And what would they find, pray, in there?

GALL. Why, first, a good deal of sham. You know what a maid is?

BETSY. What?

GALL. Why, what but a thing that is *made*?

BETSY. That is scarcely a new accusation.

GALL. Few very true thoughts are new ones. There are some

society women who in character often seem just what they are in appearance. Three-fourths of their substance is dress; and all of the soft sleek satin and silk is on the outside.

BETSY. And what on the inside, pray?

GALL. Well, very extensively, pins.

BETSY. (*Wiping her eyes, as if crying.*) You are cruel.

GALL. A cry is much better than never washing the rouge off.

BETSY. And barbarous!

GALL. Wish I could make your soul as clean as a barber can make my face!

BETSY. You know I have always been good and religious.

GALL. And so were those who stabbed and killed the martyrs of old. They were all of them very religious. But not even their dagger could wound like the sting of a woman's tongue; for that can kill the soul. If ever you marry, Betsy, your husband's hand may be hard; and his face have a beard like a bear's; but, simply because he is human, his heart may be soft as a babe's; and the one needs a woman's love as much as ever the other. He would never have asked for this love had he failed to need it, Betsy. Most men, when young, too, imagine the woman they love as an angel. She is not, of course, but they think it; and if, when you get them married, and they come to you for their rest, with as holy a feeling as ever one felt when coming to heaven; if then, you sting, merely sting them, the devil himself could not match your driving them down into hell; and when you have driven them there, your prayers, your meetings, your psalm-tunes, your beads, your Bibles, your prayer-books, your charities, virtues, and pleas can never conjure one charm to keep the devil away from them, or from you.

BETSY (*crying*). Oh, uncle!

GALL. I suppose that my words appear hard; but I mean you shall learn a lesson—a hard one for you to remember. You may have another chance yet; but whether you do or do not, I shall pray to the Lord that the joy of yourself and your mate may not all be hung on the slender thread of your not having been found out! You ought to take on a new heart that, when found out, can be loved.

Exeunt—Right Third—BETSY and GALL.

Enter—Right Upper—ALICE and LORN.

ALICE (*to LORN*). At times you can get away?

LORN. I can.

ALICE. We shall hope to see you.

LORN. Hope looks above itself. It is I that should have the hope.

ALICE. True worth seems always above the lives that feel that they need it.

Enter—Left Upper—HARRY and WINNIE.

WINNIE (*to HARRY*). But what would my brother do then?

LORN (*who has evidently overheard the question, and interprets its meaning through their looks*). Congratulate both of you, Winnie (*Shaking WINNIE's hand vigorously, then HARRY's*). Most

heartily, yes. Why, Winnie, if you are to leave the ranch, perhaps I will leave it, myself. But whether you do or not, you are paid in your own coin now in the shape of this new found sister. (*Waiving his hand toward ALICE, who shakes hands with WINNIE and kisses her, then both shake hands with HARRY.*)

HARRY. (*To LORN.*) From what I have heard of you, you ought to have married before.

LORN. In the words of the one who controlled her, I had to wait till the time I had shown myself a man.

HARRY. And I had to wait till the time I had shown myself a woman.

WINNIE. (*To HARRY.*) No, no; do not flatter yourself. You played the part pretty well; but you did not look it, Harry, and you did not work it, at all.

LORN. You hardly seem sorry for that.

WINNIE. Not very. I like him for what he really is.

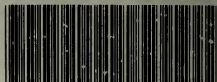
HARRY. (*To WINNIE.*) That is just why I like you. I am not the only one here that has shown himself when playing the ranch girl. You, my Winnie, have shown—as clearly as light—amid all that might rid the ranch of the rules of the drawing room, yes, that you are one who could never be anything less than a lady. (*HARRY, WINNIE, LORN, ALICE.*)

CURTAIN.

END.

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